
JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

Volume 16

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2005

1892-S Barber Half

See page 14



PCGS VF-35

Photo courtesy of Scott Mathison

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JOURNAL OF THE
BARBER COIN COLLECTORS' SOCIETY

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BCCS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Barber Society *Journal*. As I started to write this, I reviewed my message from the previous issue. I'll keep myself honest and report I haven't written the history of the BCCS for the website (I will do this). Also, I decided not to write 'tidbits' on the Richmond II sale where a great set of all silver Barbers was sold. John Feigenbaum of DLRC is to be congratulated on conducting the three Richmond sales with this last the best of all for Barber collectors.

Our annual meeting will be held at ANA on Saturday morning, July 30th at 9:00 a.m. Note that ANA has successfully changed the place of the 2005 convention to San Francisco. This may be a difficult trip for east coast members but easier for those residing on the west coast. Certainly, San Francisco is a gem of a city!

I've spent more time preparing this message due to the survey Eileen added to the literary contest and dues notice. The survey simply asked: "What are your three favorite Barber coins and why?" 33 members participated with many individuals providing comment and discussion on their choices. As a starting point, here by denomination are coins receiving more than one nomination (# of mentions):

DIMES: 1894-S (2), '95-O (6), '96-S (2), '05-Omicro (4), '13-S (2)

QUARTERS: 1896-S (4), '97-S (3), '98-S (2), '01-S (10), '09-O (5), '13 (3),
'13-S (6)

HALVES: 1892-O micro (3), '96-O (3), '97-O (2), '01-S (3), '04-S (2), '13 (2),
'14 (4)

While one notes the classic rarities and varieties are mentioned, members also spoke of obtaining special coins from dealers both well-known and obscure. Others celebrated finding a date in the grade long desired (ranging from G to AU-58). Some individuals didn't choose three favorites, rather just one:

1896-O half MS-66,

1897-O half VF-35 (bought at a coin club meeting),

1896-S dime ("should be an R12! in XF-AU").

Every response was unique whether just listing coins, describing obtaining a date, or detailing one's experience ("started buying VG-F but went to EF with some in AU"). Here are additional comments about specific coins:

1895-O dime XF/AU ("the most valuable thing I own except my car")

(continued on page 22)



BCCS EDITOR'S MESSAGE

In the last issue, John Dembinski showcased two of Charles Barber's other designs, the Liberty Head Nickel and the 1893 Isabella Quarter. Several articles in past Journals cover information about the more familiar Liberty Head Nickel, but I knew nothing of the Isabella Quarter until John mentioned it. Coincidentally, I received in the mail soon afterwards a March sale catalog from a numismatic auction house featuring an Isabella Quarter MS-65 (PCGS) retailed at \$2,800. What did it look like? Why had Barber chosen Queen Isabella, a woman, to adorn the coin? My curiosity aroused, I went in search of a photo of the quarter and more information about it. This is what I learned.

The Isabella Quarter was the first U.S. commemorative quarter, the first U.S. coin featuring a portrait of an actual woman, and the only one bearing a woman on both its obverse *and* reverse. The fact that it honored women's role in industry is not all that odd once you know what was going on in America at that time.

By 1890, Susan B. Anthony and the Woman Suffrage Movement were in full swing. She saw the upcoming World's Colombian Exposition as a platform on which to showcase exhibits dealing with women's interests. She successfully petitioned Congress for a Board of Lady Managers to oversee women's activities at the Exposition and funding for a Women's Building there. Wealthy Bertha Honoré Palmer of Chicago was appointed president of the Board of Lady Managers.

It was Mrs. Palmer who, aware of the Colombian Exposition commemorative half-dollar which was to be made, successfully lobbied the Congressional Appropriations Committee for funding for 40,000 commemorative quarters. With the female theme in mind, she insisted that a woman be shown on the coin and

THE JOURNAL NEEDS YOUR ARTICLES!

Remember your article submission(s) automatically enters you in the BCCS Literary Contest. The article receiving the most member votes will win a 1st place prize of \$50. Second place prize will be \$25 and third place will be a free one year BCCS membership. So, make sure your membership is up to date and get your article to Eileen at the post office or e-mail address on page 3.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS Sept. 1st

recommended Isabella, Queen of Spain, who had been Columbus's benefactor.

Wanting only female input for the design, Mrs. Palmer chose New York artist Caroline Peddle, a student of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, to create the design. This greatly offended Chief Engraver, Charles Barber, who would approve none of Ms. Peddle's designs. Instead, he chose artist Kenyan Cox to prepare sketches from which Barber personally created models and dies for the new quarter.

Charles Barber's design features the bust of a young Queen Isabella on the obverse. Encircling the bust, it reads UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. 1893 is located to the right of Isabella. The reverse features what was, at the time, the major industry of women. It shows a woman kneeling, holding a distaff used for spinning wool or flax in her left hand and a spindle in her right hand. The border inscription reads BOARD OF LADY MANAGERS and COLOMBIAN QUAR. DOL.



On June 13, 1893, the Philadelphia Mint began production on the 40,000 quarters. Between 40 to 100 proof struck coins are estimated to have been made in addition to three special documented proof quarters: coin #400 (the 400th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America), #1492 (the year he discovered it), and #1892 (the anniversary year). The three special documented proof quarters were presented to the Board of Lady Managers.

The souvenir Isabella Quarter cost \$1.00 at the Women's Building at the Expo. Compared with the huge attendance of the Expo, only a small quantity of the quarters actually were bought. Over 15,000 pieces were returned to the Mint to be melted down.

Many thanks to John for bringing this coin to my attention. His article on Barber's 1903 Gold Dollar commemoratives begins on the next page.

The Other Barbers, Part 2

By John Dembinski

I hope everyone thoroughly enjoyed reading my first installment in this series of articles titled “The Other Barbers” as much as I enjoyed writing it. To look at and study some of the other wonderful coinage designs by Mr. Barber alongside his famous dimes, quarter dollars, and half dollars was, and continues to be, a refreshing change of pace for me as I continue my adventures in coin collecting.

In the last issue of the Journal, we looked at and discussed Barber’s Liberty Head “V” Nickel and the 1893 Isabella Quarter Dollar, both beautiful designs indeed. In this issue, let’s look at two of Barber’s designs for the Gold Dollars of 1903 which were made for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition held in St. Louis in 1904.

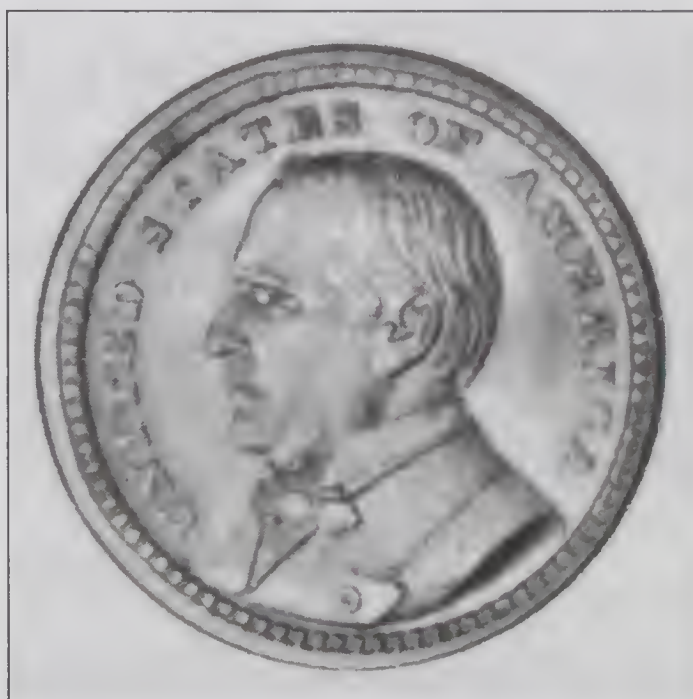
There are two varieties of these gold dollars. The first shows the head of Thomas Jefferson, who was president when the Louisiana Territory was purchased from France and Napoleon Bonaparte on April 30, 1803, for the paltry sum of fifteen million dollars (real estate was REAL cheap back then!). The second design bears a portrait of then President William McKinley who sanctioned the Exposition. Both coins carry identical reverses which include the Expo legend, date, and denomination with olive branch. The McKinley portrait is said to have been adapted by Barber from his U.S. Mint McKinley medal. It is also known that a few proofs exist for each type and that many counterfeits of each coin exist as well.

Mintage figures for both coins are identical; however, in A Guide Book of United States Coins (The Red Book), 56th Ed., 2003, the mintage figure is given as 17,500, whereas in the Coin World Comprehensive Catalog and Encyclopedia of United States Coins, 2nd Ed., the figure given is 17,400, while in the Coin World Almanac, 7th Ed., the figure given is 17,375. (Go figure!) What do you think?

When the coins were released to the public, they sold for \$3.00 each (probably a lot of money back then). The March 2005 issue of Coin Prices lists both coins at \$650.00 in AU-50 and \$940.00 in MS-63, not too bad a price considering their low mintage and, besides, who knows how many of these wonderful coins are still in existence today.

Always keep in mind that a number of counterfeits of these coins are known

to exist, and my advice to the collector would be to buy certified examples. Personally, if I'm going to put out that much money for a somewhat scarce coin, I'd like to have the assurance that the coin is genuine. Trust me, you'll sleep better.



There are two varieties of these gold dollars. The first shows the head of Thomas Jefferson, who was president when the Louisiana Territory was purchased from France on April 30, 1803. The second design bears a portrait of then President William McKinley who sanctioned the Exposition.

Both coins carry identical reverses which show the Expo legend, date, and denomination with olive branch.



Next time, we'll look at a few more of Charles Barber's wonderful designs on commemorative coinage. Until then, happy collecting!

Sources:

A History of the United States: The National Experience, 2nd Ed., 1968

A Guide Book of United States Coins (The Red Book), 56th Ed., 2003

Coin World Comprehensive Catalog and Encyclopedia of United States Coins, 2nd Ed., 1998

Coin World Almanac, 7th Ed., 2000

Barber Quarters a Challenge in any Grade

By Paul M. Green

There are not many better collections when it comes to coins that were produced, at least in part, in the 20th century. It is probably something we could debate for years without a clear decision, but the Barber quarter, coin-for-coin, may well be as tough a collection as there is from the past century, and the only reason prices are as low as they are today is probably because relatively few people make the effort.

In fairness, the Barber quarter started prior to 1900, but not by much. It, along with the Barber dime and half dollar, first appeared in 1892, but the majority of all three were produced in the 1900's. Moreover, in the case of the Barber quarter, two of its most famous three dates were produced after 1900, which is close to the correct ratio for coins produced from 1892-1916.

If officials had their way, there would have never been Barber quarters, dimes or half dollars. The idea back in the early 1890's was a design competition. The competition, however, was best described by one as a "wretched failure." For some reason, everything involving the design competition was wrong. Many of the most accomplished artists were not involved, but two dominant figures - Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Mint engraver Charles Barber were. As judges.

Over the years in numismatic circles, Augustus Saint-Gaudens has come to be viewed as something close to a hero for his great talent and designs, and Charles Barber has assumed something of the villain's role. In fairness, Saint-Gaudens was more talented, while Barber was almost certainly more technically adept, at least when it came to making coins designed for circulation.

In the matter of finding designs for circulating coins back in the early 1890's, Saint-Gaudens was at least as much to blame for the problems as Barber, but it was Barber who was to benefit by having his designs used.

The whole thing probably qualifies as a black comedy of some type. Officials invited the top 10 artists as they identified them to submit designs. The idea was innocent enough, but Saint-Gaudens and the other nine invited responded not

with designs, but rather a list of what might gently be called demands for their participation. The officials had thought the whole thing would be viewed as an honor, but the nation's leading artists apparently did not see it that way.

From there it went from bad to worse. Officials decided to reject the demands and expand their options, making it an open design competition. Two of the three judges, however, were Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Charles Barber. Both had the same idea for once in their lives, which was that each was the only person qualified to design a coin of the United States.

Under the circumstances, with a design needing at least the vote of one of these two, the competition was facing something of an uphill struggle. It was actually an impossible struggle, as Barber and Saint-Gaudens were not only egotistical - they also showed a certain stubborn streak in their feelings about coins. Sure enough, the competition could not produce a winning design. It should have been no surprise, with two of the three judges determined no one was qualified even before the first design was submitted.

In the end, frustrated officials simply gave Barber the job of designing the new coins. If the design failed to cause dancing in the streets, it probably did not matter to officials, who were almost certainly happy to have the entire matter behind them as long as the coins worked. Like most coins Barber was involved with, they worked with minimal problems.

If you look at the Barber quarter today, you are not immediately struck by the difficulty some dates present. There are four dates with mintages of more than 10 million pieces and a few others that were close to 10 million, but what is really lacking are dates with mintages in the four million to seven million range. Except for a few at eight million and above, you are left with a large group of dates, all of which can be very tough.

It must be remembered, after all, this was 1892-1916 and coin collecting was still only enjoying modest popularity. As important, the collectors of the nation were not, in many cases, able to afford a quarter collection. A quarter at the time was a good deal of money. Moreover, Barber quarters were produced at a number of facilities.

Over time the Barber quarter would be produced at Philadelphia, New Orleans, San Francisco and Denver. While there would be good coins produced at all facilities, San Francisco would gain a reputation for the great rarities of the Barber quarter series.

With a few exceptions, it is safe to suggest that there is no such thing as

a common Barber quarter in any grade, but there are certainly some better dates. More than a dozen had mintages of less than 1 million. Two, the 1901-S at 72,664 and the 1913-S at 40,000, were less than 100,000. The 1913-S at 40,000 was the lowest mintage business-strike silver coin of the 20th century, which would suggest a high price, and a \$550 G-4 price certainly cannot be considered excessive under the circumstances. The 1913-S moves to \$5,300 in MS-60 and \$14,000 in MS-65.

It is not, however, the key Barber quarter. The 1896-S, with a mintage of 188,039, comes close with a price of \$350 in G-4 and MS-60 listings of \$5,400, just \$100 more than the 1913-S. In MS-65 however, the 1896-S is \$22,000 - significantly more than the 1913-S in the same grade.

If you really want a challenge, the key Barber quarter is neither the 1896-S or 1913-S, but rather the 1901-S, with a very low mintage of 72,664. The 1901-S simply does not seem to exist in any grade. Consider these prices: in G-4 it lists for \$2,200, in XF-40 it is \$9,800 and in MS-60 it is \$19,000, with an MS-65 now at \$45,000.

In light of its low mintage, such prices would not be totally surprising. The 1913-S, with a mintage of just 40,000 a decade later, would seem to suggest that the 1901-S is very expensive, but it has always been that way, as the 1901-S is even tougher than its mintage indicates, something which many would find hard to believe.

It could simply be a matter of luck, as some coins just did not survive while others did. The 1931-S Lincoln cent survived thanks to collector saving, as did the 1950-D Jefferson nickel, but there were not many collectors in San Francisco in 1901. It was likely thanks to many new coin designs by 1913, more people were aware of and saving coins.

There may be another factor, and a very natural one at that. There was no Federal Reserve System back then. The coins made at San Francisco tended to stay around San Francisco, and on April 18, 1906, San Francisco was destroyed first by an earthquake and then by fire. There was very little left of homes, businesses and most importantly banks. In fact, emergency relief funds and other business for a time took haven in the San Francisco branch mint facility, which was one of the few buildings left standing.

The two-pronged disaster must have had an impact on coins, as what was left was basically smoking rubble. We do not normally think of coin scarcity in terms of natural disasters and the losses they might cause, but this was a very different time and the evidence is clear. The city's financial institutions were destroyed and

coins did not circulate like they do today.

On top of that very circumstantial evidence, the market gives us some clues that pre-earthquake coins from San Francisco are tougher than post-earthquake dates with similar mintages.

The 1901-S, compared to the 1913-S, is the most extreme example, but it is not the only one. The 1902-S had a mintage of more than 1.5 million, while the 1907-S was over 1.3 million, yet in G-4 today, the higher-mintage 1902-S is \$8, while the 1907-S is \$5.

The 1903-S was just over one million, while the 1915-S was just over 700,000. The 1903-S in G-4 today is \$10, while the 1915-S is \$5, and there is a \$1,700 difference in MS-65, with the 1903-S being more, while in MS-60 it is approaching twice the price of the 1915-S. There was no 1904-S, but the 1905-S had a mintage of more than 1.8 million, while the 1909-S was more than 1.3 million. The 1905-S is \$6.25, while the lower-mintage 1909-S is \$5. The 1905-S is also about a dollar more than the 1907-S, even though it had a mintage roughly 500,000 higher and the two were only two years - and one disaster - apart. It is not solid proof, but it certainly is a pattern, one which seems to go against normal reasoning, where the lower-mintage dates, even while a few years newer, should be at least the same price, if not more.

One post-earthquake San Francisco date that is better is the 1914-S, but there is good reason. With a mintage of 264,000, the identical mintage of the 1916-D Mercury dime, the 1914-S ranks as the fourth-lowest mintage Barber quarter. It lags only the big three: the 1896-S, 1901-S and 1913-S. The 1914-S, while low mintage, is not priced like a 1916-D Mercury, reflecting the lower demand for the Barber quarter with a G-4 today at \$57.50, while an MS-60 is \$850 and an MS-65 \$3,400.

If anything, the 1914-S quarter compared to the 1916-D dime is a perfect example of the role demand plays in pricing, for the two were only two years apart with very similar mintages. Moreover, the 1916-D was probably more heavily saved, yet it is \$850 in G-4 as opposed to \$57.50 for the 1914-S.

There are a number of other better Barber quarters, and in most cases they are from San Francisco. One exception is the 1901-O, which is currently at \$27.50 in G-4. It goes to \$800 in MS-60 and \$5,750 in MS-65. In fact, the 1901-O, at a bit over 1.6 million pieces for a mintage, is not one of the extremely low-mintage dates, and New Orleans did not suffer a major earthquake at about that time. The 1901-O is a simple case of a better date that was not saved. It did not stand out as low mintage - New Orleans was not a collecting hotbed and there were few Barber

quarter collectors back in 1901. It all takes a toll on potential coins available for today's collectors.

Similar in price to the 1901-O is the 1897-S, which had a mintage of 542,229 and has a G-4 price of \$25, \$800 in MS-60 and \$5,750 in MS-65.

There are a few Barber quarter dates at \$10 to \$20, including the 1892-S, which had a mintage just under one million pieces and is \$16 in G-4 today; the 1899-S, which is just at \$11 in G-4 despite a mintage over 700,000, and the 1903-S is also at \$10 in G-4. The 1908-S is also a \$12 date in G-4 and another with a mintage under 800,000, and the 1909-O also barely over 700,000 with a current price of \$12.50 in G-4.

The rest of the Barber quarter dates are under \$10 in G-4, and that list includes a lot of low-mintage dates like the 1915-S, which is just \$5 in G-4 but had a mintage of 704,000 making it one of the cheaper G-4 20th century coins you will find with a mintage barely over 700,000. The Philadelphia 1913 is a real sleeper, priced at \$9.50 with a mintage of just 484,613.

Compare that mintage to the 1909-S VDB cent, which was at 484,000 and is currently priced at \$425 in G-4, and you have another classic display of the importance of demand and a strong collector base, as here are two dates created in the same five-year period that are just 613 coins apart in mintage, yet one is \$500 and the other is \$9.50. The 1909-S VDB is not out of the picture cost wise, but the 1913 Barber quarter had to be considered a real good deal at \$9.50.

Lack of demand makes Barber quarters available in upper grades if you have the budget. In MS-60, the 1897-S is \$950, while the 1896-S, 1901-S and 1913-S are all much more. Otherwise there are very few dates at even \$500, although the otherwise overlooked Philadelphia 1913 is now at \$900, making it perhaps the next date to top \$1,000 in MS-60.

Every date in MS-65 is at least \$1,000, but only the three usual suspects - the 1896-S, 1901-S and 1913-S - top \$10,000. A couple other dates are coming close and they may serve to tell us a bit about the period, as well.

The 1898-O is at \$10,000. It had a mintage of more than 1.8 million. The 1909-O with a mintage of 712,000 is at \$8,700. The presence of two New Orleans dates in the top five MS-65 Barber quarters may suggest something about the quality of coins being produced at the New Orleans facility during the period.

The 1896-O is \$7,500, the 1901-O is at \$5,750, and the 1903-O lists at
(continued on page 17)

1892-S Barber Half Dollar

By **Scott Mathison**

Barber Half Dollars were first struck at the Philadelphia Mint in January of 1892. The Barber Half Dollars were minted for 25 years from 1892 to 1915. Barber coins, the half dollars in particular, saw very extensive usage, and most were worn down to AG condition. Barber Half Dollars were still found in circulation well into the 1950's. Even though many Barber Halves had mintages of more than one million, the numbers of surviving mint state examples of any date are quite small when compared to the original mintage. Most key and semi-key dates that are commonly found are in AG-VG condition.

Barber Halves were minted at the Philadelphia Mint and in the San Francisco, Denver and New Orleans branch mints. Of the branch mints, the San Francisco Mint issue coins are the scarcest and usually demand a premium over other issues of the same year that were minted elsewhere. Let's focus on the 1892 -S. I really like this date because not only is this coin from the first year of issue, it is the first Barber Half minted at a branch mint.

The 1892-S had a mintage of 1,029,028. Quite a few coins for the first half struck at the San Francisco Mint. Don't let the high mintage fool you; this is not a readily available coin in any grade. Perhaps 90-95% of this date that still exists is in grades between AG and G.

The 1892-S is one of the key dates to the Barber Half set. The coin starts out at \$235 in G, \$330 in VG-8, \$400 in F-12, \$480 in VF-20, \$580 in EF-40, \$625 in AU, and a MS-60 example lists for \$915 (Coin Price Guide, May 2005). One thing that I have learned is when it comes to nice original problem free Barber Halves, key or semi-key dates, you can throw the price guide in the trash. Let me give you a recent example of a date other than the 1892-S. I recently was on eBay bidding on a nice 1904-S Barber Half that had been graded by NGC as an EF-40. I put in a bid of \$1500, and with one day left, I was the higher bidder at the price of \$1395. Needless to say, I was outbid on the last day. The final ending price for the coin was \$2200. That is quite a lot when you consider the price guide lists the coin at \$890 in EF-40. For those of you who are ever hunting for a nice original coin with great eye appeal, be prepared to spend a bit more and sometimes a real premium over current list price for any key or semi-key date. If you can purchase any of the common date Barber Halves at below current retail prices, I suggest picking them up and putting them away for a rainy day.

The 1892-S has a scarcity rating of R3 in any grade. An R3 means that it is a tough date and only a few may be available at a large show. According to David Lawrence in *The Complete Guide to Barber Halves*, the combined number of coins graded by NGC and PCGS is only 262. That's not very many when you consider a coin that has a mintage of over 1 million. NGC has only graded 106 1892-S Barber Halves. Of the 106, only 39 have been graded between grades G and AU-58. PCGS has graded a total of 156 1892-S Barber Halves. Of the 156, only 68 have been graded between G and AU-58. You can't always go by the current population reports. I only use them as a guide because I am sure there are a lot of other coins out there that have not been certified.

In the last three years, the 1892-S has seen modest gains. I predict that not only Barber Halves, but Barber coins in general will start to see the attention that they deserve in the next year or two. For my fellow Barber collectors, good luck and happy hunting locating the dates that you need to complete your set(s). I have enjoyed collecting Barber Halves for the last three years, and I look forward to locating the next date I need for my set. As always, I truly enjoy reading other articles by the members of the BCCS journal, and I hope that you enjoy my article as well.



1892-S Barber Half PCGS VF-35

The annual BCCS meeting will be held at ANA Sat., July 30th at 9:00 a.m. in Room 3003, Level III, Moscone Convention Ctr., 800 Howard St., San Francisco, CA

Clamshell Error on a 1901-S Barber Dime

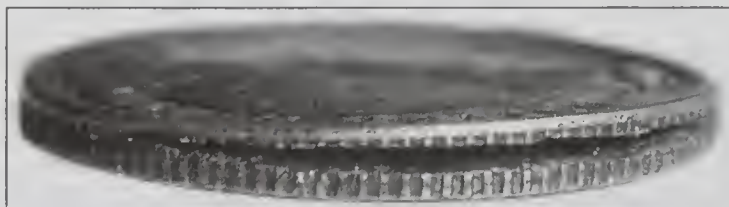
By John Frost

In addition to Barbers, I also like to collect unusual coins, like odd denominations or nice circulated 19th-century proof-only issues and patterns. This has been a nice diversion for me since I have been having a lot of difficulty finding nice Barbers lately. My luck finally changed recently when I picked up an interesting coin, which is both a Barber, and a rare and unusual item as well.

At a friend's table at a recent show, I noticed a clamshell split planchet dime. This type of error is fairly common in nickel coinage (especially in nickel 3 cent pieces and Buffalo nickels), because of poor planchet quality causing the coins to come apart. However, this type of error is much rarer in silver coins. My keen sense of observation (!) showed me that the error was on a Barber Dime. What made it even more interesting is the date written on the corner of the 2x2 was 1901-S in AU50!



It is a nice original coin, that “opens” on the left side as evident in the photo above. Fully half of the circumference of the coin is split in two, right through the reeded edge. The coin's separation caused the plastic of the 2x2 holder's windows to bulge. My friend said he had owned the coin for several months and really had no takers on it. I guess most people looking for a higher-grade 1901-S dime are looking to put the key date in an album with the rest of the set (where the split planchet would not be visible at all). But this weird item is just the kind of coin I try to find.



He sold it to me for AU bid, which makes the coin a bargain even without the interesting error. I have put it in a 2x2 meant for a half dollar to give the coin

more room to spread apart for all to see. I have even more fun with this coin by not listing the coin's date on the holder. I let viewers discover that for themselves!



1901-S Split Planchet Clamshell Dime



Barber Quarters a Challenge in any Grade

(continued from page 13)

\$6,000, while the 1905-O is at \$5,500. These New Orleans dates represent a high percentage of the total dates for all four facilities in that group, a very strong suggestion that New Orleans was not turning out top-quality coins at the time.

For the collector of any grade, the Barber quarter represents a real challenge, but that challenge is lessened at least a bit by modest demand, which has kept prices lower than they might be were the demand similar to that for Lincoln cents and Mercury dimes.

The demand is unlikely to change significantly, but in the case of the Barber quarter, some of these dates are simply in short supply even in very low grades.

You may be always be able to buy a 1901-S or 1913-S, but the question down the road will be at what price, as even since 1998 the 1901-S has moved from \$1,750 to \$2,200, while the 1913-S was going from \$415 to \$550. That is just in G-4, a strong suggestion that collectors know and understand the scarcity of some Barber quarters. Even a few new collectors of the series can put real pressure on the limited supply.

Barber Quarter Mintmark Types

Part 6 in a Series

By **Steve Hustad**

It's springtime and a young man's thoughts turn to coin collecting! Errrrr, well okay, maybe not, but mine *sometimes* did, and when that happened I got in the car and headed for a coin show with my 10x loop and a lot of enthusiasm.

I keep detailed records of each coin I buy and study its characteristics. Some call this "obsessive-compulsive disorder," others call it "detail-oriented and patient." Either way, it's opened up a world of new (to me anyway) varieties for collecting that were previously mostly unknown.

The study of mintmarks falls into this category and, as I found out with the dime series, you can get two different styles in a single year. Or within a series, sometimes you just notice that the coins in this later era look a bit different than those earlier on, but can't quite put your finger on the 'why' part. That's where this string of short articles comes in.

To many collectors, an 'S' is an 'S' and an 'O' is an 'O,' and so on. While studying this series (the quarters are my favorites), I noticed some differences in the mintmarks of different years. Sure, there are always the filled digits, die chips, and extreme wear that can change their looks, but what I'm talking about here is the mintmark's logotype style.

The quarter mintmarks don't exhibit the same wide variety as the dimes do (see previous installment in this series), but they are still interesting.

The first 'S' mintmark plate: 1892 - 1897, illustrates what I'll call "Style A." It shows the size and style of the mintmark punch used from inception in 1892 through, and including, the 1897 minted pieces. As with the dime series, this punch is identical to that used on the Liberty Seated quarter series. Gotta use 'em up 'till they wear out! This style's characteristics include a fat and squarish-looking 'S' with nearly closed loops and tall serifs. As with the dimes, when well-worn (or from a die chip), the inner loops can become closed and solid looking; but this

is from wear, damage, or dirt and not a distinct die variety. Unfortunately, I've observed no overlap with 1898 dated pieces, (or 1897 dated pieces with the next style) - yet anyway - so check your collections!

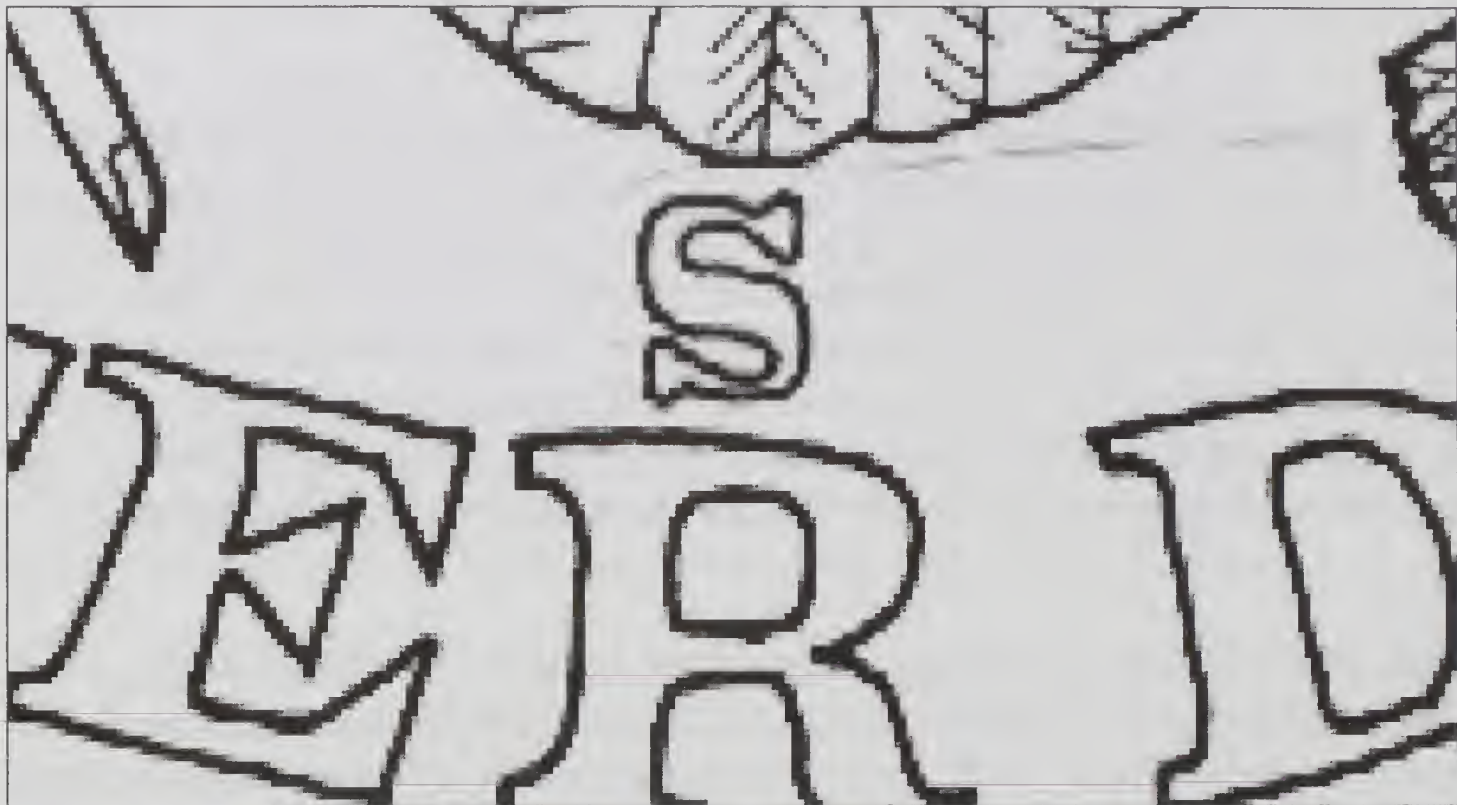
The second 'S' mintmark plate: 1898 – 1915 (no quarters from San Francisco in 1916), illustrates what I'll call "Style B," and pictures the style and size used throughout the balance of this series. This 'S' mintmark punch is now noticeably rounder and is quite similar to the style used on the dimes from 1892 - 1899 (dimes, "Style A"). This mintmark mimics the style used on the halves during that same early period. Again, no overlap with adjacently dated pieces, but keep looking, because you never know! In fact, I'm amazed at the new discoveries still coming to light after all these years of study by so many dedicated enthusiasts.

The only 'O' mintmark plate: 1892 - 1909, illustrates what I'll call "Style A." Again "Style A," as in the previous Liberty Seated years, continues into the Barber Quarter series. Characterized by an overall style as per the 'S' mint pieces, Style B. Fat sides, thin at the top and bottom and used throughout the quarter minting in New Orleans until its closing after 1909. No variations have been seen by this author.

The only 'D' mintmark plate: 1906 - 1916, illustrates what I'll call "Style A." This type was the only one used throughout the Barber quarter's mintage at Denver. A fat 'D,' again following more of a rounded and wide styling.

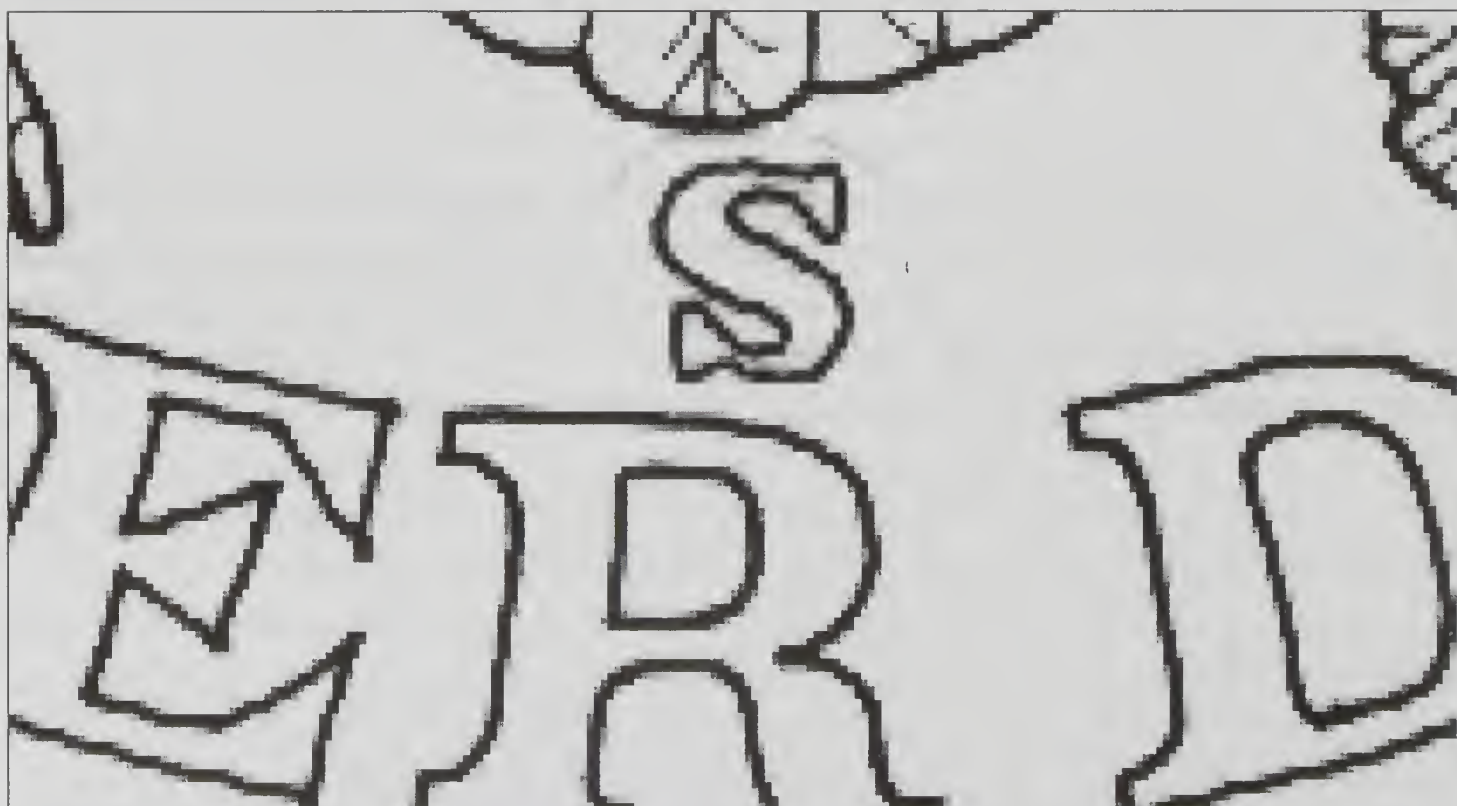
The mintmark style variation with the dimes (and later we'll look at the halves) was more varied and interesting - after all, it's hard not to get the blood flowing over 'micro O' mintmarks and overlapping dates! Anyway, this installment ends the portion dealing with the quarters. Next issue – the Barber Halves series: its three obverse Hub types and single reverse hub.

If you happen to come across any overlapping mintmark styles, we'd all like to hear about it. Until then, happy collecting & cherrypicking!



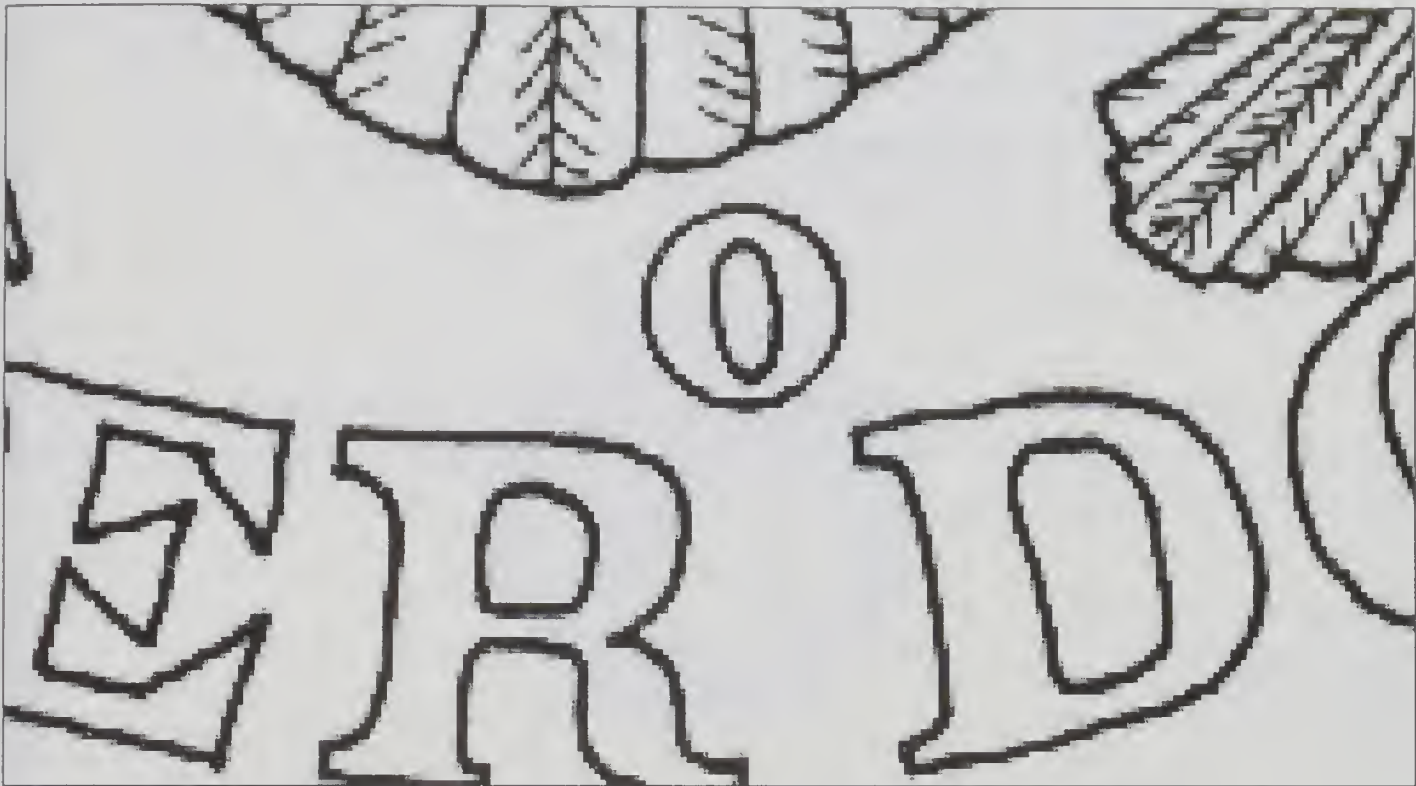
‘S’ Style A: 1892-1897

The “squared S.” Very boxy shape with horizontal crossbar and fat serifs; mostly closed loops.



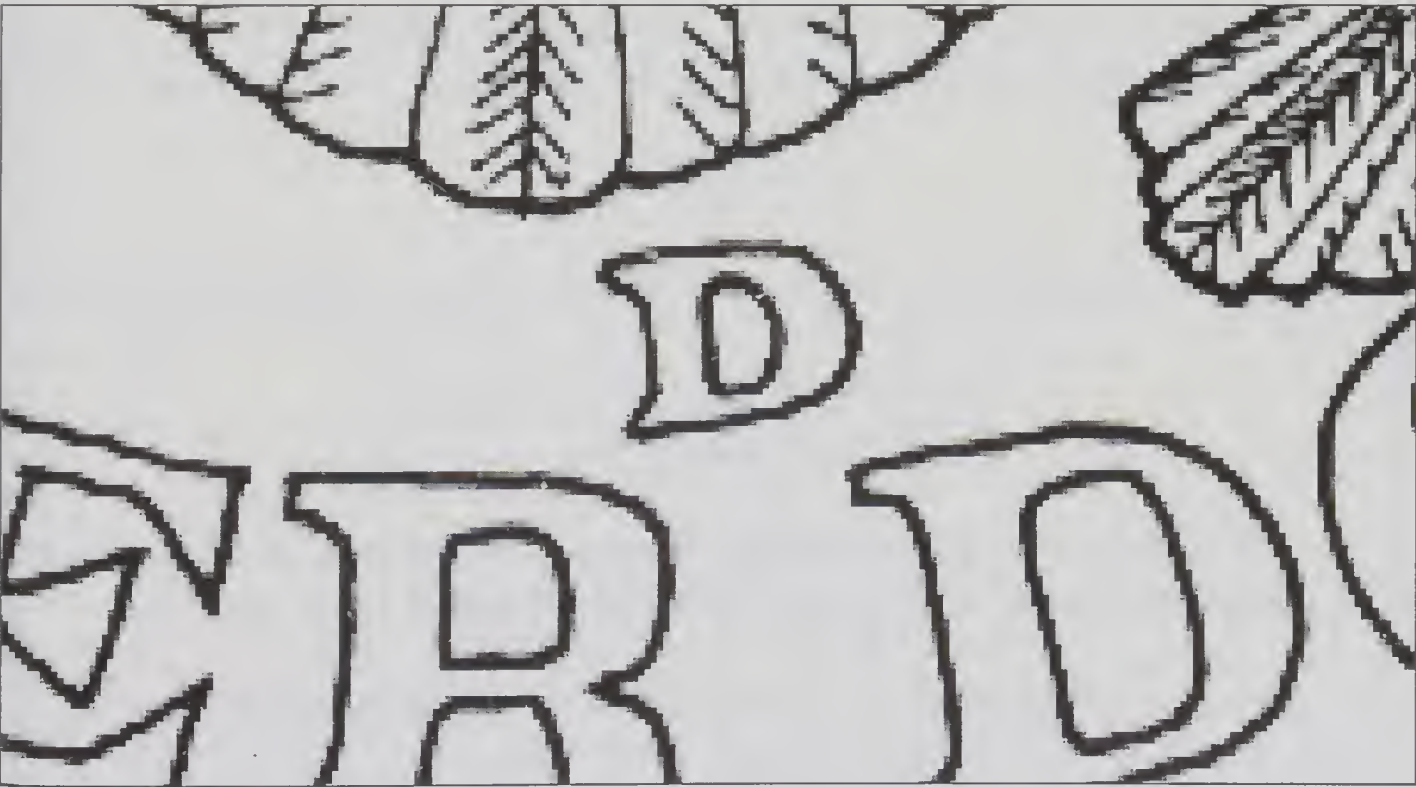
‘S’ Style B: 1898-1915

The “curved S.” Now like the dimes and halves of this era.



‘O’ Style A: 1892-1909

Type as in previous years; used, unchanged, throughout series.



‘D’ Style A: 1906-1916

Small fat ‘D,’ unlike that used on dimes and halves; thick serifs.

President's Message

(continued from page 5)

1890-O dime ("no further comment")

1909-O quarter ("my favorite, have a roll in G-VG")

1897-S quarter (member used one date in 3 grades—G, VG & F)

1913 (collects the year in Barbers)

1894 nickel (the only Barber nickel mentioned)

And the neatest favorite was "All Barber halves!"

I judge the survey to be a hit. It was unstructured and responses were interesting and unscripted. We will do this again next year and vary the focus. Thanks to all for your participation.

Numismatic regards,
Phil Carrigan
Philrph1892@cs.com



BARBER BITS

The annual BCCS meeting will be held at ANA Sat., July 30th at 9:00 a.m. in Room 3003, Level III, Moscone Convention Ctr., 800 Howard St., San Francisco, CA



We regret the passing of BCCS member #355, **Clayton J. Hagemann**, on Nov. 30, 2004.



*Many thanks to member **Ralph Vignola** for bringing the following blurb, which appeared on page 21 of the April 2005 Numismatist, to my attention.*

The Barber Coin Collectors' Society webpage at www.barbercoins.org studies the work of U.S. Mint Chief Engraver Charles Barber, who served from 1880 to 1917. Barber is best known for his Liberty Head designs of 1892-1916 and the "V" nickel of 1883-1912. The club's homepage links to articles, descriptions of the coins (including a rarity census) and a sample issue of the club journal in PDF format.

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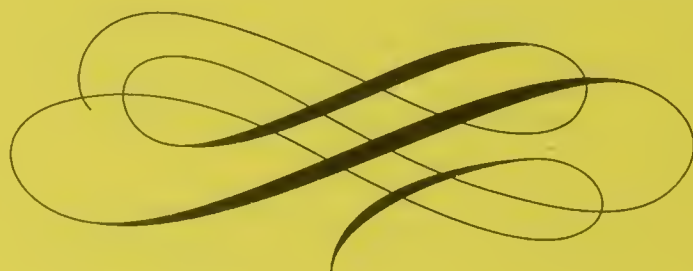
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